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Dear Karen,
I lost you.

You are never coming back to me. I write you these letters and I remember what we once had, but it still won't change the fact that...

...I lost you.

WHERE ARE YOU, KAREN?

Book Five: AGAINST THE ROPES

I'm not saying it got any easier over the years, but it was never more frightening than the first time you disappeared.

You used to call me "The Man Without Fear," Karen. On that night, though, I was afraid I had lost you.

Foggy had sent you downtown to deliver some papers to our client, "The Owl." You didn't return to the office. That was very unlike you and Foggy became worried.

As it turned out, the office address The Owl had given us was an empty building.

I checked your apartment and you weren't there. Your landlady hadn't seen you since that morning.

I promised Foggy I would find you and despite the fact that he knew I was blind, he believed me.

TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE.

SPEAK MY NAME.

New York has the reputation of being the city that never sleeps, but she quiets down quite a bit after midnight.

I found a spot where I thought I would have the greatest range and I tried something I was never really very good at.

Then, I remembered my Dad telling me I could do anything as long as I wasn't afraid.

So I thought about you and...I listened.

At first, it was just a lot of noise.

BTOOM! BTOOM! BTOOM! SKREE WHEEOO WHEEOO WHEEOO

...WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY..?

...THIS IS *ME*, HOLDING MY BREATH...

...FINE, YOU WANT *ME* TO DRIVE..?

...*YOU* SHUT THE HELL UP...

...WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD BANK..?

...LIKE I CARE...

...*SHE'S* EXACTLY YOUR TYPE...

...HAVE WE *MET*..?

...T'AMORE, CHRISTINE...

Then.

...MISTER MURDOCK...

...HE'LL REALIZE I'M MISSING AND HE'LL CALL THE POLICE AND...

...HE *WON'T* GO TO THE POLICE IF HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU HARMED, MISS PAGE...

...WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?

...ANYONE CAN *OWN* ANYONE, MISS PAGE, THE KEY IS OWNING THE *RIGHT* PLAYERS ON THE BOARD.

...TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, YOUR EMPLOYER, MISTER MURDOCK...

...MISTER MURDOCK IS *BLIND* AND BLIND MEN ELICIT A CERTAIN SYMPATHY FROM A JURY...

...OWNING A PIECE LIKE *THAT* MAKES THE GAME THAT MUCH EASIER TO PLAY...

...AND ONCE MISTER MURDOCK REALIZES HOW VULNERABLE HE IS BY MY KEEPING YOU HOSTAGE, HE'LL DANCE LIKE ANY PUPPET ON MY STRINGS...

The Owl was with you and you kept him talking. And he was the sort of man who liked to talk.

KEEP HIM TALKING, KAREN.

By the time I found the right building, The Owl was no longer there. Someone else was there with you. A woman's voice. Her name was Grace, and she had wanted to hire us, claiming to be terrified by The Owl.

...WAIT, I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE THAT WOMAN WHO CAME TO OUR OFFICE. YOU GAVE US THAT WILD STORY ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND...

...I DID WHAT I WAS TOLD. IT WAS WHAT *THE OWL* WANTED AND I DID WHAT I WAS TOLD...

FINANCIAL BANK

FOR LEASE

BUT HE'S *GONE* NOW. YOU COULD HELP ME TO GET OUT OF HERE.

DO YOU THINK THIS WAS EASY FOR ME?

THE OWL UNCOVERED THINGS ABOUT ME. PERSONAL THINGS. *SECRETS.*

HE PROMISED THAT IF I PLAYED MY ROLE, HE'D LET ME GO AND NOW I HAVE AND HE HAS, TOO.

JUST... FIND THE KEYS AND THROW THEM UP TO ME.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

DON'T GO!

THERE'S NO ONE TO HELP ME...

SOMEDAY.

SOMEDAY YOU'LL HAVE A SECRET AND YOU'LL SEE HOW MUCH IT'S WORTH TO YOU.

I'LL HELP YOU, MISS.

You smiled. Even though I couldn't see you, I could tell. You smiled and in my head it was as bright as day.

WHO — DAREDEVIL..?!

FIRST, WE HAVE TO GET YOU OUT OF THERE.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? BEND STEEL WITH YOUR BARE...

...HANDS!

NOT EXACTLY *BARE.* THE GLOVES HELP.

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED.

WHY? AREN'T YOU AFRAID?

SHOULD I BE?

I didn't tell you that by touching the bars, I could sense their weakest point.

Or maybe, it was like those moments where the adrenaline is running so high, ordinary men can lift up cars.

Or maybe, on that night, I was determined never to lose you again.

OH.

OH, I SEE.

DAREDEVIL.

THE MAN *WITHOUT* FEAR.

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE WHEN THE OWL GETS BACK.

THEN... YOU'LL HAVE TO LET GO OF ME.

RIGHT.

NOW, RUN, KAREN! DON'T STOP FOR ANYTHING UNTIL YOU REACH THE POLICE!

Holding you in my arms, it never occurred to me that you were so close you might recognize me.

The cut of my chin. The sound of my voice even though I had lowered it like a super hero is supposed to.

Something that would give me away. After all, it was the first time Daredevil had met Karen Page.

"KAREN"..?

Oops.

HOW... HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME?

THAT'S EASY, KAREN.

I'VE SEEN YOU IN MY DREAMS EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER.

How much different would our lives be if I had just told you right then? Would you still be alive today?

HA!

VERY FUNNY. YOU PROBABLY JUST OVERHEARD ME TALKING TO THE OWL OR...

GO! NOW! THE OWL IS --

I was so focused on you, I didn't notice the scent in the bank had changed.

YOU CAN'T COME INTO AN OWL'S ROOST AND STEAL HIS EGGS.

IN THE NIGHT, IN THE DARKNESS, *THE OWL* RULES.

WHAM!

It all happened so quickly. I know that my attention was diverted by you, Karen, but...

...in the darkness, I should have had the advantage.

I hadn't had much experience with super-villains. And I didn't think of The Owl as anyone other than a lumbering businessman.

HEE-HEE WHOOO WHOOo HEE!

He could fly, Karen. Like, well, a bird. A big. Fat. Bird.

THIS IS A *BUSINESS* MATTER BETWEEN TWO PARTIES. IT SHOULD NOT INVOLVE *YOU.*

I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THERE ARE SOME HOOLIGANS WHO NEED ROUSTING *SOMEWHERE ELSE* TO OCCUPY YOUR TIME.

And while I was still getting my bearings, he was going to beat my brains in.

Right in front of my gal.

You never would listen to me, would you, Karen?

SORRY, *TUBBY*, BUT YOU'RE THE *CHEAP, PENNY-ANTE CROOK* I PICKED FOR TONIGHT.

WHEET WHEET WHEET

Even if it was for your own good, you were too stubborn, too of your own mind, to let me tell you anything.

Maybe, that's why I loved you so.

LEAVING SO SOON? THE PARTY HASN'T EVEN --

...STARTED../

HEE-HEE WHOOO WHOOO HEE!

The Owl nearly got away that night.

More than anything, it meant he could hunt you down and hurt you.

HE WHO LIVES TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY AND ALL THAT...

I was young and foolish enough that I thought I could keep this from happening ever again.

THE MOTTO OF *COWARDS* AND *THIEVES*, OWL.

WE ARE FINISHING THIS TONIGHT!

My father would talk about what it would take to put a man down in the ring and keep him there.

How on some nights you could hit a man with everything you had, and he would not fall down.

It wasn't that the other fighter was impervious. He could be bloodied and rocking, but something held him up.

He was hoping to be saved by the bell.

It wasn't the most distinguished way to win, but you could say you went the distance.

In boxing, that meant you held onto an ounce of respect.

If you were still standing, you might even get a rematch.

It all came down to where you were at that final bell.

The Harbor Patrol arrived shortly thereafter and finding The Owl became their headache.

I learned pretty quickly that super-villains had an ugly habit of coming back from the "dead".

ELSON AND JROCK NEYS AT LAW

Despite all that happened...

...I just wanted to know that you got home safely.

...AND THEN *DAREDEVIL* SWOOPED DOWN AND *WHAM,* HE KICKED THAT DARN OL' OWL RIGHT WHERE IT HURTS.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD QUITE THE NIGHT.

I WISH YOU COULD'VE SEEN IT, MISTER MURDOCK -- I MEAN, I WISH YOU COULD'VE *BEEN THERE.*

WHEN DAREDEVIL MOVES, IT'S LIKE --

-- OOOMPH!

KAREN.

THE WAY YOU TALK ABOUT DAREDEVIL... A *REGULAR GUY* WOULDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHANCE...

...THAT IS... IF YOU STILL DON'T HAVE A BOYFRIEND.

PRIVATE

WHY? DO YOU HAVE SOMEBODY IN MIND?

UM...

PRIVATE

YOU'RE NOT *JEALOUS* OF *DAREDEVIL*, ARE YOU, MISTER MURDOCK?

UH... I DON'T THINK I'D MAKE A VERY GOOD SUPER HERO, KAREN. ALL THAT *FIGHTING* AND *FLYING* AROUND.

I THINK THE ONLY PERSON I'D WIND UP HURTING WOULD BE *MYSELF!*

"TAKE THAT, VILLAIN! SAY, DID I HIT YOU OR WAS THAT THE LAMP?"

OH, MISTER MURDOCK...

NEL
AND
MURD
ATTORNEY

LOEB
SALE
2001